Synopsis

Client: Major container distributor, with over 1000 customers and 175,000 square feet of warehouse space.

Key Pains: Multiple disconnected systems, which results in redundant work, shipping errors, inaccurate invoicing and dismal cash flow.

Solution: Microsoft Dynamics NAV

Key Benefits: Reduced errors and administrative overhead, coupled with a fully scalable solution to manage increased sales without additional personnel.

The Client

Champion Container is one of the largest distributors of packaging on the East Coast. Their products range in size all the way from 330 gallon IBC's used in heavy industrial settings to medical vials used in laboratories. With a client roster nearly 1,000 strong, they serve businesses ranging in size from very small companies to such internationally recognized names as DuPont, L'Oreal, ADM Cocoa, and BASF. Every year they ship hundreds of thousands of units from 3 centrally located warehouses in New Jersey and Massachusetts, which together house over 175,000 square feet of storage space.

These warehouses, combined with a dedicated trucking fleet, enable Champion Container to provide next-day delivery. This is a key component of their customer value proposition of fair and competitive prices, unrivalled service, prompt delivery, and outstanding technical support.

The Challenge

With their business focused so heavily on service and prompt delivery, it is no surprise that robust, responsive, and reliable information systems are a key requirement for Champion Container. With the business growing year by year, their old system had begun to show signs of strain. Order processing had become an overnight affair. There were periodic system crashes as well.

But the major difficulty was that their system was not Y2K compliant. It was time for a change. Unfortunately, though, their problems had only just begun.

A new beta system was selected to replace Champion's order entry, fulfillment, and accounting package. It was purported to be custom-designed for distributors. Everything seemed to work well in demonstrations and all assurances as to reliability were given, but, once the system was actually installed, major flaws were discovered. Modules could not accurately exchange information with each other so entered orders did not get shipped correctly. Neither the order entry nor shipping modules reconciled with accounting so financial statements and management reports were not accurate. Everyone from senior management on down was scrambling to put things right manually. The system had failed them.

The Solution

A new CFO who had worked with Clients First earlier in his career arrived on the scene. He invited Clients First in to see what could be done. Rather than jumping to conclusions or making an off-the-cuff recommendation, Clients First took the time to analyze the situation, ultimately

recommending a Microsoft Dynamics NAV solution. It had the benefit of having been used by literally thousands of companies worldwide, and was thoroughly tested and completely reliable. Better still, its user interface greatly resembled the previous system that Champion had used, so that the learning curve for new users was greatly reduced.

With minimal customization, the system was installed. Everything worked perfectly.
The company-wide anxiety and scrambling that the existing system was causing went away.
Productivity returned.

The Benefits

That was 8 years ago. In addition to significant gains in customer satisfaction levels and operational efficiency, the most telling statistic of all is that **while sales have grown by over 100% - the administrative personnel hired to deal with that increase in volume has grown by a mere 2%**. Clearly, the solution is extremely scalable and has supported Champion's growth in an extraordinarily cost-effective manner.

There are other benefits. Financial statements now take moments to prepare. Likewise, key management reports. Everyone has the information they need to manage their part of the business. Orders are processed quickly and accurately, each and every time. Inventory levels are kept at the lowest level needed to fully meet demand, resulting in a reduced working capital requirement and, in the end, higher profitability. Invoicing is quick and accurate and collections are able to be actively managed so that the best possible cash flow is achieved, again reducing working capital requirements.

All in all, the solution fully and cost effectively supports Champion Container's business at both a strategic and tactical level.

In Summary

Jack Aizenman, CFO at Champion Container, sums things up this way:

> *Clients First does exactly what their name says. They put the client first. They focus on solving problems, not just making a sale. They are everything I'd want a supplier to be – service focused, customer oriented, and professional. And very, very capable.*